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COLLEGE OF
SURGEONS OF
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SOUVENIR



THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

SOUVENIR
OF
THE CENTENARY
OF THE
ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
OF ENGLAND
1800 – 1900



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The First Incorporation



THE first incorporation of Physicians and Surgeons into a distinct body, having for its object the effective control of those who practised Medicine and Surgery, took place in the year 1423. Previously to this, however, there had existed in London, from time immemorial, a Guild of Surgeons who had maintained a superiority over the Guild of Barber-Surgeons but had remained unincorporated. The conjoint Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of 1423 did not exist long, and soon after its dissolution the Surgeons formed themselves into a corporate body with a code of laws. This association consisted principally of Military Surgeons, who formed a separate Guild or Fellowship, numerically small, but distinct from the Barber-Surgeons, who had been incorporated in the first year of the reign of King Edward IV. They were licensed to practise by the Bishop of London

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

or the Dean of St. Paul's, and they remained a separate body until 1540, when they joined with the Barber-Surgeons under a Royal Charter granted by King Henry VIII., under the name of the "Masters and Governors of the Mystery and Commonalty of the Barbers of London."

The union of the Surgeons and the Barbers lasted two hundred years, though not without a feeling on the part of the Surgeons that their union with the Barbers was disadvantageous, and in 1684 they petitioned the King to dissolve the union. But matters remained as they were until 1744, when a Bill was brought before Parliament to make the Surgeons and the Barbers of London into distinct Corporations. This Bill received the Royal Assent on May 2, 1745.

The new Company of Surgeons was incorporated by the name of the "Masters, Governors and Commonalty of the Art and Science of Surgeons of London," and the Corporation consisted of twenty-one Assistants appointed for life; of these, one was Master and two were Wardens selected annually, and ten were Examiners, who were appointed for life.

One of the first acts of the new Company was to secure a piece of ground in the Old Bailey, on which was erected a building containing a Theatre for Lectures,

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

a Library, a Committee-room, and a large room for the reception of their Community.

In this "Surgeons' Hall" the business of the Company was carried on until 1796, when it was reported to the Court of Assistants that the building was in need of substantial repair, and that there were only fifty-five years of their lease to run, so the property was sold and a freehold house was purchased in Lincoln's Inn Fields, on the site of which a part of the present buildings of the Royal College of Surgeons now stands.

The Surgeons' Company was badly managed and the books were irregularly kept. By the Act of Incorporation it was enacted that the presence of the Master, one of the Wardens, and one or more of the Court of Assistants, should constitute a Court for the despatch of business. In May 1796, at a meeting of the Court, the Master and several of the Assistants were present, but no Warden was there. The Court was therefore illegally constituted, but nevertheless it proceeded to transact business. Upon laying a Case before Counsel, with a view to ascertaining the position in which the Company stood, it was found that they had destroyed their Corporation by their informal act.

An attempt was made to rectify the error by bringing a Bill into Parliament to legalise their irregular proceeding. This Bill was, however, violently opposed by those who

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

practised without possessing the Diploma of the Company, and was thrown out. The Company was now reduced to serious straits; no business could be transacted and no Examinations could be held. Eventually a compromise was come to between the Court of Assistants and those who opposed the Bill, and a new Act of Parliament was sought which should convert the old Company into a College, with a Council of thirty Members, a President and four Vice-Presidents. The chief stipulations in this Act were that all practitioners in England and Wales should be subject to the Examination of the Court of Examiners; that the Lectures on Anatomy should be on a more extended scale; that there should be no disqualifying By-law, so far as regards the practice of Midwifery and Pharmacy; that a Library and Museum should be formed; and that Surgical Transactions should be published periodically.

The terms of the Act were eventually agreed to, but before it became law a suggestion was made that "a Charter from the Crown would be preferable to a Bill in Parliament." In due course, therefore, the first Charter was drawn up and received the Assent of his Majesty King George III. on March 22, 1800, and the old Company became the Royal College of Surgeons in London. All municipal privileges having been thereby removed, the

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Members of the College no longer enjoyed any franchise as Freemen of the City of London, and no longer continued under the jurisdiction of the Mayor and Corporation.

The Governing Body remained the same as that which existed in the Surgeons' Company—viz., a Court of Assistants, which consisted of twenty-one persons, of whom ten were Examiners; of these ten, one was Principal Master and two others were Governors. This body had power to make and amend by-laws and transact "all such other business as the Court of Assistants of the late Company might or could do."

In this way the present College of Surgeons was established exactly one hundred years ago "for the due promotion and encouragement of the Study and Practice of the Art and Science of Surgery."

A Brief History of the College from 1800 to 1900

WHEN the College of Surgeons received its Charter in 1800 it consisted of about 230 Members and was ruled over by a Court of Assistants, composed of twenty-one of these members. Charles Hawkins, Serjeant-Surgeon to the King, was appointed the first Master, and William Long and George Chandler became the first Governors. The first Court of Examiners consisted of the Master, the two Governors, and seven Members, chosen from the Court of Assistants. The Members of the Court of Examiners were appointed for life.

All Members of the original Company were entitled to become Members of the College, but any person in the future desiring to become a Member was required to pass an examination and to obtain the "letters testimonial of his qualification to practise the Art and Science of Surgery under the Common Seal of the College."

In addition to examining candidates for the Membership, a further duty of the Court of Examiners was to examine all Army and Navy Surgeons, their Assistants and Mates, and to inspect their instruments.



CHARLES HAWKINS. THE FIRST MASTER

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

By a supplemental Charter passed in the third year of the reign of King George IV., the principal Master was in future to be denominated the President of the College; the Governors were to be Vice-Presidents, and the Court of Assistants were to be the Council of the said Royal College. The power was also granted to the College to hold lands and rents to the yearly value of £2000, without incurring any penalty in any Statute of Mortmain—the Act of George III. (1800) had allowed the College to hold land or rents only to the yearly value of £1000.

By this Charter the College was further authorised to exercise the Right and Privilege of having a Mace, and of causing the same to be borne by such officer as the Council should appoint for that purpose.

It soon became evident that the constitution of the College as determined by the Charter of 1800, and the supplemental Charter of 1822, did not satisfy the general body of Members. The Governing Body consisted of a small number who were self-elected, who held office for life, and who had unquestioned control of the affairs of the College. The majority of the Council were Surgeons connected with the Metropolitan Hospitals.

A regulation of the College which excluded the teachers of all Provincial and Private Medical Schools from

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

giving Certificates of Attendance caused dissatisfaction, and an agitation was commenced against it in the Medical Journals, which led in 1834 to the formation of a Parliamentary Committee on the subject. This Committee collected a large amount of evidence, but nothing further was done until 1843, when a new Charter was obtained.

This Charter instituted a new Class, from amongst the Members of the College, who were to be called Fellows, from whom the Council were to be selected by the vote in person of the Fellows ; the number of the Council was increased to twenty-four, and the three senior Members on the Council were to retire each year, so that no Member could hold his seat for a longer period than eight years, without re-election, to which he was eligible.

It was ordained by this Charter that within three months the Council should elect to the Fellowship a certain number of Members, not less than 250 or more than 300, and that after the three months, but within one year of the granting of the Charter, it should be lawful for the Council to appoint any other Member to be a Fellow of the College.

The first Fellows were chosen mainly from the Surgeons, Assistant-Surgeons, and Lecturers of the Metropolitan and Provincial Hospitals. They were elected on December 11, 1843, and of them three remain at the present time—viz.,

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Carsten Holthouse, formerly Surgeon to Westminster Hospital ; Dennis Embleton, formerly of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Royal Infirmary ; and Henry Spencer Smith, Consulting Surgeon to St. Mary's Hospital.

A second series of Fellows, 242 in number, were elected in compliance with the stipulations of the Charter, in August 1844, and these included a considerable number of representatives of the Naval, Military and Indian Forces. Of this number three Fellows are still amongst us—viz., William Edmund Image, J.P., of Mildenhall, Suffolk ; John Birkett, Consulting Surgeon to Guy's Hospital ; and Sir John Simon, K.C.B., late Medical Officer of Health to the Privy Council.

All other Fellows at the expiration of the year of grace were to be admitted only after passing a special Examination, but not until they had attained the age of twenty-five years, such Fellows, by virtue of admission to the Fellowship, becoming also Members of the College, if they did not already possess that Diploma.

The first admission of Fellows by Examination took place on December 24, 1844, and of those who were then admitted one survives, Luther Holden, Consulting Surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who is thus the oldest Fellow by Examination.

No Member, not a Fellow, was eligible to a seat on

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

the Council, nor was any Fellow who practised Midwifery or Pharmacy.

Other privileges were granted by this same Charter of 1843. The first of these was that the Corporate name or Style of the College was altered from "The Royal College of Surgeons in London" to "THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND."

A great change was also effected by this Charter in the constitution of the Court of Examiners. They were no longer necessarily selected from the Council, but from the general body of the Fellows; they were to hold office only during the pleasure of the Council, and the Serjeant-Surgeons, and the Surgeon-General no longer had any preference, as had been the case up to that time, in regard to their appointment as Examiners.

The President and Vice-Presidents were no longer chosen exclusively from the Examiners.

By a subsequent Charter in 1852, power was given to the Council to elect Members of fifteen years' standing to the Fellowship without Examination, provided they had obtained their Diploma of Membership prior to the enactment of the Charter of 1843, and furthermore it empowered the Council to admit to the Fellowship, in each year, two Members of twenty years' standing without Examination, who need not necessarily

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

have obtained their Diploma prior to the Charter of 1843.

A Supplementary Charter was obtained in 1859 empowering the College to appoint a Board of six Examiners in Dental Surgery, three of whom were to be Members of the Court of Examiners, the other three being persons skilled in Dental Surgery.

In 1888 a fresh Charter was granted, mainly with the object of allowing the Fellows to elect Members into the Council by voting papers instead of as theretofore by ballot. The College was also empowered to hold Lands of the yearly value of £20,000.

The final alteration in the constitution of the College is the power granted to it by Her Gracious Majesty in the present year of her reign to elect a body of Honorary Fellows, who shall never exceed fifty: these Honorary Fellows shall not be eligible as Members of the Council or of the Court of Examiners, nor shall they be entitled to vote at any election of a Member of Council, but they shall enjoy all the other Corporate rights and privileges attaching to the Fellowship.

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

The College-Building

THE College of Surgeons, designed by Dance, and completed in 1813, was, according to the *Percy Histories*, "a fine though somewhat heavy building of the Ionic order, with a lofty and handsome portico, surmounted by the arms of the College supported by figures of the sons of Æsculapius—Podalirius and Machaon. Underneath was the motto, *Quæ prosunt omnibus artes*." Twenty-two years after its completion it proved inadequate to display the addition of preparations which had been made to the Museum, and as more space was required for the rapidly increasing Library, the greater part of the old building was demolished, and the present one erected on its site by Sir Charles Barry. It was completed in 1836.

The Museums are grouped along two sides of the Entrance Hall, the Lecture Theatre, the Secretary's Office, and the Conservator's Room.

In 1847 further enlargement of the Museum became necessary, and some property in Portugal Street, at the rear of the College, was purchased. The expense of



THE ENTRANCE HALL



THE MUSEUM. ROOM I

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

building this addition amounted to £25,000, of which Parliament contributed £15,000. But, as the Collection continued to increase, two additional Museums were added in 1888. The Library was also enlarged by annexing the Conservator's house, situated to the east of the College, and a new residence was built for the Conservator on some land belonging to the College farther east. The cost of the alterations was mainly defrayed through the munificent bequest of the late Sir Erasmus Wilson, F.R.S., a former President of the College.

The Museum

THE Museum of the Royal College contains the preparations of John Hunter, made by his own hand.

By his Will, Hunter directed that his Collection should be offered to the British Government, and that, in the event of their refusing to purchase it, it should be sold, as his executors might think proper. Considerable reluctance was displayed by the Government to purchase, and Pitt said, when urged to do so : "What, buy Preparations !

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

Why, I have not money enough to purchase gunpowder.” Six years after Hunter’s death, however, Parliament voted £15,000 for the purpose, and the Museum was entrusted to the custody of the Corporation of Surgeons ; and when, in the following year, the Corporation was dissolved and the Members were incorporated by Charter under the title of “The Royal College of Surgeons in London,” the Museum was transferred to their charge on condition :

(1) That the Collection should be open on two days in the week to Fellows of the College of Physicians and Members of the College of Surgeons, and to persons properly introduced by them. That a Catalogue of the Preparations should be made, and that some one should always be present to afford explanations.

(2) That a course of Lectures on Comparative Anatomy and other subjects, illustrated by preparations in the Museum, should be given every year by Members of the College.

(3) That there should be a Board of sixteen Trustees, who should take care that the College performed their engagements respecting the Collection, and that they should annually inspect the Museum.

Hunter’s collection was arranged under the following heads :



THE MUSEUM. ROOM 3

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Physiological Department or Normal Structures

Physiological preparations in spirit	3745
Osteological preparations	965
Dry preparations	617
Zoological preparations	1968
Fossils : Vertebrate	1215
Invertebrate	2202
Plants	292

Pathological Department or Abnormal Structures

Preparations in spirit	1084
Dry preparations	625
Calculi and Concretions	536
Monsters and Malformations	218
Microscopic preparations	215
	13,682

In addition, the Collection contained many and important Manuscripts on various branches of Human,

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

Comparative and Morbid Anatomy, and of Physiology and Histology.

Shortly before the Collection was removed from its original position in Castle Street to Lincoln's Inn Fields these Manuscripts were taken by one of Hunter's Executors, Sir Everard Home, to his private residence, where they were very largely used by him in the preparation of Papers for the Philosophical Transactions and for his Lectures on Comparative Anatomy. After he had completed his work, in order to conceal his piracy, he burned the Manuscripts so used.

Since the Hunterian Collection was first entrusted to the College of Surgeons it has been largely added to, and it now contains more than double the number of preparations that it then did. Still, it is but an expansion of the Museum which Hunter left, being arranged on the plan which he himself indicated. As Abernethy says : "The simplicity of his object induced an almost equal simplicity of arrangement ; the facts are displayed in his Museum according to the order of the vital processes."



THE MUSEUM, ROOM 5

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

The Conservators

WILLIAM CLIFT, who was an Apprentice of John Hunter, superintended the removal of the Hunterian Collection to Lincoln's Inn Fields and arranged it in the new Museum in accordance with the Catalogues which he had prepared during the years 1794 to 1806. To the industrious Clift the College owes a special debt of gratitude for the extracts which he made from Hunter's MSS. before they were so deplorably destroyed ; as he himself states, he was the means of preserving in substance nearly one-half of what John Hunter had written.

The second Conservator was Richard Owen, who as a young Surgeon practised in the neighbourhood of the College and spent his spare time in the Museum, assisting Clift. He married Clift's daughter, and in 1842 he succeeded him as Conservator. He was followed in 1852 by John Thomas Quekett, who had long helped Owen in the work. To Quekett the College owes a considerable portion of the Histological Collection, which now contains upwards of 12,000 specimens, catalogued for reference. Quekett died in 1861 and was succeeded by William Flower, the late Director of the South Kensington Natural

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

History Museum ; he held the office of Conservator for twenty-three years and was succeeded by the present Conservator, Mr. Charles Stewart, F.R.S.

The Library

WHEN the Surgeons separated from the Barbers in 1745 the new Company took nothing away with them save the Arris and Gale Bequests, the Barbers retaining their Hall, Library and Plate. But when the Corporation of Surgeons built their Hall in the Old Bailey, one room was designed for a Library ; still nothing was done towards supplying it with books. Shortly after the formation of the Royal College of Surgeons in London a grant of £50 was made for Library purposes, and this was followed in future years by further grants.

The total number of volumes, including Journals and Transactions, is over 50,000 ; they are ingeniously catalogued, both as regards Subjects and Authors, on cards arranged in cabinets. The present Librarian is Mr. Victor Gustave Plarr.

THE LIBRARY.



ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

The Examinations

THE Diploma of Member is granted in conjunction with the Licentiatehip of the Royal College of Physicians after examinations conducted conjointly by the two Colleges. The first Examination, which may be passed at the end of the first year of study, is in Chemistry and Physics, and Biology : it is conducted by a staff of Examiners appointed partly by the College of Physicians, and partly by the College of Surgeons. The second Examination is in Anatomy and Physiology, and should be passed at the end of the second year of study : it is conducted by twelve Examiners appointed by the two Colleges conjointly. The final Examination, which, when passed, entitles the candidate to the two Diplomas of L.R.C.P. and M.R.C.S., is in Medicine, Surgery and Midwifery. It cannot be entered for until the curriculum of five years is completed, nor until two years after the student has passed his Examination in Anatomy and Physiology. The Examination in Medicine is conducted entirely by the College of Physicians : the Examination in Surgery is conducted by a Court of ten Examiners appointed

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

by the Council of the College of Surgeons, and the Examination in Midwifery is carried out by a Board of nine representatives of the two Colleges.

Before being admitted a Member of the College the candidate is required to sign a Declaration that he will observe the By-laws thereof; that he will obey every lawful summons issued by order of the Council; that he will demean himself honourably in the practice of his Profession; and that he will to the utmost of his power maintain the dignity and welfare of the College.

The Fellowship of the College is granted to those who successfully pass through a very rigid series of Examinations in Anatomy, Physiology, Surgery and Surgical Pathology.

These Examinations are for the most part conducted at the Examination Hall built by the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons on the Thames Embankment out of their common purse. The first stone of the building was laid by Her Majesty on March 24, 1886. The Hall contains extensive Laboratories, where Research-work is carried on. Any Fellow or Member of either College, upon making application, and stating the

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

nature of the investigations which he proposes to carry out, if approved by the Laboratories Committee, receives permission to work therein, and all materials needed by him are supplied by the Colleges. Here also the Superintendent of the Bacteriological Department prepares the Diphtheria antitoxic serum for use in the Hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and the various General and Children's Hospitals. The cost of this latter supply is defrayed by a Grant from the Goldsmiths' Company.

Trust Funds

THE ARRIS AND GALE LECTURESHIP dates back to the year 1645, when Mr. Alderman Arris informed the Court of the Barber-Surgeons "That a person, a friend of his (who desired his name as yet to be concealed), through his great desire of the increase of the knowledge of Chirurgery, did by him freely offer to give unto this Corporation for ever the sum of £250, to the end that a humane body be once in every year hereafter publicly dissected, and six Lectures thereupon read in

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

this Hall, if it may be had with conveniency, and the charges to be borne by this Company."

Thirty years afterwards it transpired that Mr. Arris was himself the benefactor, and eventually he increased his gift to £510.

THE GALE LECTURE was founded in 1507 by Dr. John Gale, of Bushey, who left a sum of money, producing about £16 a year, for the purpose of founding an annual Lecture on Anatomy. Clopton Havers (the discoverer of the Haversian canals of bone) was chosen as the first Lecturer. The Arris gift and the Gale bequest were subsequently merged into one Fund.

THE ERASMUS WILSON FUND was founded by the late Sir Erasmus Wilson, who in 1870 gave £5000 to the College to institute a Professorship in Dermatology. This in 1880 was altered to a Professorship in Pathology, and in the following year the Professorship was changed into a Lectureship, and part of the income was devoted to the payment of a Pathological Curator of the Museum. Three Wilson Lectures are given annually.

THE BRADSHAW BEQUEST.—By the will of Mrs. Sally Hall Bradshaw, of Reading, £1000 were bequeathed in 1880, the income from which was to be expended upon a Lecture on Surgery, to be delivered annually in memory of her late husband, Dr. William Wood Bradshaw.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

THE JACKSONIAN PRIZE.—In 1800 Samuel Jackson gave to the College the sum of £333, the interest whereof was to be given to the Author of the best Dissertation on a practical subject in Surgery.

THE WALKER PRIZE was founded in 1894 by Mr. Charles Clement Walker, of Lilleshall, Shropshire, who gave £540 to found a Prize to be competed for by persons investigating Cancer.

THE JOHN TOMES PRIZE.—In 1894 the Executive Committee of the Sir John Tomes Prize-Fund offered to the College of Surgeons £310 for establishing a triennial Prize for work done in Dental Surgery and Anatomy.

THE SIR GILBERT BLANE MEDAL was instituted in 1829. The Medal is awarded by the Director-General of the Medical Department of the Navy, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, and the President of the Royal College of Surgeons. The money given by Sir Gilbert Blane to pay the cost of the Medals was £300.

THE BLICKE FUND.—In 1816 Sir Charles Blicke presented the sum of £300 on condition that the interest be devoted annually to the purchase of books.

THE HUNTERIAN FUND.—In 1813 Matthew Baillie and Sir Everard Home, "being desirous of showing a lasting mark of respect to the memory of the late Mr. John Hunter," invested the sum of £1684 in the name

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

of three Trustees, the interest of which was to be devoted in the following manner : Ten pounds were to be paid to an Orator, chosen by the Court of Assistants, who on the 14th of February in each year—the date of Hunter's birth—should deliver in the College an Oration in memory of John Hunter. The residue of the interest to be expended in a dinner on the evening of the same day.

Lectures

THE HUNTERIAN ORATION is delivered biennially to celebrate “the name and fame” of John Hunter.

THE HUNTERIAN LECTURES are given in accordance with the conditions under which the Hunterian Collection was entrusted by the Government to the custody of the College. Six of them are given by the Conservator of the Museum, and the remainder are usually given by two Hunterian Professors, chosen by the Council. The three ARRIS AND GALE LECTURES and the three ERASMUS WILSON LECTURES are given by Lecturers selected by the



JOHN HUNTER

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Council. The Bradshaw Lecture has, hitherto, always been delivered by a Member of the Council at the close of the year.

Portraits and Busts

THE Royal College of Surgeons possesses Portraits and Busts of many of its former Presidents and Members of Council. Most valued among these is the life-sized picture of John Hunter, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A., in 1785, which hangs in the Council-room. The portrait represents Hunter seated by his table, with his chin resting on his left hand, the elbow being supported by the table, "in deep reverie, in one of those waking dreams to which he refers in his Lectures."* It is probably the finest portrait ever painted by Sir Joshua. The artist has introduced Hunter's portfolio open at the page which represents the descending series of crania in the human race, while in the background are indicated the skeleton of O'Brien, the young Irish giant, now in the

* Hunterian Oration, by Sir William Mac Cormac, Bart., 1899.

SOUVENIR OF THE CENTENARY

Museum, and a preparation showing the vessels of the heart, suggestive of his work on Aneurysm.

Scarcely less valued is the portrait of Sir Astley Cooper by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., which also hangs in the Council-room.

Amongst other notable portraits in the Council-room is one, by Romney, of Percivall Pott ; one of Sir Anthony Carlisle, by Sir Martin Shee, P.R.A. ; and one by Hogarth of Sir Cæsar Hawkins.

Of the more modern paintings there is in the Secretary's office a full-length portrait of Sir William Fergusson, by Lehmann ; one of Richard Quain, by Sir George Richmond ; of Lord Lister, by Oules, presented to the College by some of the Fellows and Members ; and one of Sir Thomas Spencer Wells, by Lehmann. The two last-named pictures hang in the Entrance-hall.

In the Museums is a life-size statue of John Hunter, by H. Weekes, R.A., which was erected by public subscription in 1864.

In the Hall and elsewhere are busts of Arnott, Sir Charles Bell, Sir Benjamin Brodie, Sir Astley Cooper, Joseph Henry Green, and Sir William Lawrence.

Amongst the more modern busts are those of Sir Erasmus Wilson and John Marshall, by Thomas Brock, R.A. (the former of which is placed in the new Library,



SIR ASTLEY COOPER

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

which was built out of part of the money bequeathed to the College by Erasmus Wilson), Sir James Paget, Sir John Simon, and Sir William Savory.

Mention must also be made of a colossal bust in bronze of Sir Richard Owen, by Alfred Gilbert, R.A., in the Hall leading to the Museum, and a cast of Huxley, by James Forsyth and Raffaele Monti.

It would not be right to close this brief account of the Royal College of Surgeons of England without mentioning that it possesses many interesting souvenirs of John Hunter; amongst which may be mentioned his Consulting Table, his Clock, a Cabinet, a Chair made out of his Bedstead, a combined Table and Library Steps, the Pocket Scales used by Hunter, his Lancet-case, and a small silver box.



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